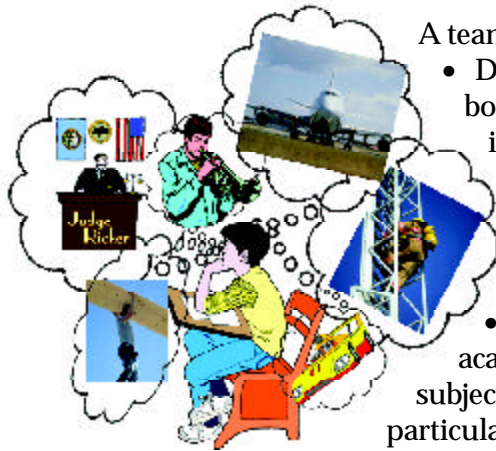


Choosing a Career

The old adage goes: If you choose a career involving something you love, then you will be happy, healthy and wise. (And you stand a pretty good chance of making money too.)



Cultivating self-awareness

Before making even tentative decisions about the rest of your life, it is important to understand who you are and what you want. An easy way to do this is to keep a journal and look for patterns in your writing. You may also want to consider specific questions such as the following:

- What do you want to be doing five, ten or fifteen years from now?
- With what sorts of people do you want to be surrounded?
- Are you a science/math computer type or do you love to paint modern art pieces?
- Are you a natural leader? An extrovert?

A team player?

- Do you find bookstores irresistible?
- Which section of the bookstore?
- What academic subjects are you particularly good at and/or enjoy?

- What skills have you acquired from work, home or from hobbies?
- Have you lived through tragic, compelling, or intense experiences which give you a unique or rich knowledge about human life?

Described below are some interesting ways to discuss your interests with career professionals and find out about some possible future careers.

Talk to professionals in the industry, or set up an informational interview

Ask a professional in your field of interest to spend an hour with you. Like most of us, professionals love to be

interviewed, listened to, and be of help or inspiration to someone like yourself. Don't be afraid to ask your parents or call up a friend of the family. Some schools, both high schools and colleges, have lists of alumni who are available for informational interviews. An informational interview is just that, an interview you set up with a professional (the alum) for the purposes of eliciting information about his or her career.

Go to work with someone (Job Shadowing)

Some organizations offer the option of allowing you to spend a day or a half of a day with a professional. This experience allows you to see what actually occurs at work.

Internships

Internships are an excellent way of exploring possible careers. Internships are usually non-paid, short-term positions at a company or institution. You receive work

experience, career-contacts and recommendations in exchange for your labor and enthusiasm.

Volunteer

Sometimes people are not sure of exactly what they want to do, but feel that they might like working to serve the needy, gain business experience, or for some other worthwhile activity. Volunteering is an excellent way to expose yourself to different kinds of work and test to see if your personality can survive the demands of non-profit or for-profit work.

Temporary work

Temping (temporary work through a "temp agency") can expose you fairly quickly to diverse work situations--and you get paid for exploring different careers! Even if you decide that a particular temp job is not really in line with your long-term goals, each job gives you work experience and knowledge about the job market.

Source: <http://library.thinkquest.org/13738/CAREERS/choose.html>

When considering your career options, you should always think about:

- What makes you happy?
- What are your goals?
- What are your dreams?